



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
October 14-18, 2013

Isipogtog First Nation Sees Violence As RCMP Moves To End Protest

[Huffington Post](#)

October 17, 2013



REXTON, N.B. -- The RCMP say they arrested at least 40 people Thursday in eastern New Brunswick as a protest over shale gas development turned violent when officers began enforcing an injunction to end the demonstration.

At least five RCMP vehicles have been destroyed after they were set on fire, Molotov cocktails were thrown at officers, and at least one shot was fired by someone who isn't a police officer, Const. Jullie Rogers-Marsh said in a statement.

"The RCMP has worked diligently with all parties involved in hopes for a peaceful resolution. Those efforts have not been successful," Rogers-Marsh said.

"Tensions were rising, and serious criminal acts are being committed."

The Mounties say the arrests were made for firearms offences, threats, intimidation, mischief and violating the court-ordered injunction to end the protest near Rexton.

The RCMP began enforcing the injunction at around 7:30 a.m. to end a the blockade of a compound where energy company SWN Resources stores exploration

equipment. Route 134 at Rexton and Route 11 between Richibucto and Sainte-Anne-de-Kent were closed to traffic and schools in the area were closed early for the day.

The RCMP blocked Route 134 on Sept. 29 after a protest began spilling onto the road. Protesters subsequently cut down trees that were placed across another part of the road, blocking the entrance to the compound.

The protesters, who include members of the Elsipogtog (ell-see-book-took) First Nation, want SWN Resources to stop seismic testing and leave the province.

Robert Levi, a councillor with the Elsipogtog First Nation, said he went to the protest site in Rexton early Thursday after hearing the RCMP had moved in to begin enforcing the injunction against the protesters.

Levi said police pepper-sprayed dozens of people after 9:30 a.m. when he arrived with the chief and council.

"They sprayed the crowd that was there," he said in an interview. "The chief was manhandled a little bit and all hell broke loose."

Premier David Alward did not return messages seeking comment, but last week he and Chief Arren Sock agreed to set up a working group to find a resolution. Meetings were held in Fredericton and Moncton.

At the time, Alward said: "I can say that we have a consensus that we're working towards finding a peaceful resolution and we will continue that work." He said the working group, which would include members from his government, Elsipogtog and the energy industry, would begin its work immediately.

But Sock said there were still many details to be worked out.

Alward has said he doesn't have control over decisions of the RCMP and SWN Resources.

Assistant commissioner Roger Brown, the commanding officer for the RCMP in New Brunswick, said last week he was disappointed that discussions between the provincial government and the First Nation had failed to resolve the issue. He said the Mounties would take a measured approach to resolving the situation.

Opponents of the shale gas sector say the process used to extract the resource -- hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking -- could pollute drinking water. But proponents of the industry say such concerns are overblown and don't take into account the possibility of replacing coal and oil with cleaner burning natural gas.

UN rep visits Winnipeg, and Manitoba First Nation

[CBC News](#)

Oct 12, 2013 3:46 PM CT



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be making a stop in Manitoba this weekend, as part of his tour of Canada to examine issues facing this country's First Nations.

On Saturday, James Anaya is visiting Winnipeg and Pukatawagan, Man., to meet with aboriginal people, government officials and others.

Anaya received a warm welcome from hundreds of people when he arrived in Winnipeg.

The Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection was shut down while First Nations women performed a jingle dress dance.

This is Anaya's first visit to Canada as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Anaya will examine what inequalities Canada's aboriginal peoples face in terms of economic and social rights, education, housing and health.

"So what I'm hoping to do is raise further awareness about these issues and identify some of the progress that has been made in addressing them," he said. "Some of

the challenges that remain and hopefully helping to contributing to guiding, as I said, steps towards resolving these issues."

Anaya's nine-day tour began Monday and includes stops in urban and remote communities in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

He will hold a press conference in Ottawa on Oct. 15 to talk about his tour. He is expected to deliver his report to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2014.

Sask MP's controversial bill to amend the Indian Act on federal agenda: Bill C-428 held back twice in Parliament, back on agenda

[NewsTalk 650 CKOM](#)

Oct 15, 2013 7:30am

Chelsea Laskowski

A northern Saskatchewan MP's private member bill has been held back not once, but twice.

Bill C-428 aims to repeal the Indian Act and develop a more modern legislation in modern Canada, said Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River Member of Parliament Rob Clarke.

It was drafted in December of 2011 and has gone through many incarnations. It passed through first reading in Parliament, and then moved into committee where consultations took place with people who wanted to share their thoughts on repealing and amending sections of the Indian Act of 1876.

Clarke said there have been four drafts so far and he expects it to change more as it goes through the parliamentary process.

The bill was set to move into third reading and a vote in June, but was delayed. Following that, it was to be one of the first to be read in September until Parliament was prorogued until Oct. 16.

After being an MP for more than five years, Clarke said even getting Bill C-428 on the table was tough.

"It's a lottery system in order to get on the order of precedence and now my bill has been brought to the House of Commons."

The bill has been criticized for Clarke's lack of consultation with First Nations people before he presented it federally.

However, he said the First Nations communities, organizations and individuals agree the Indian Act needs to go.

"They talk about 'get rid of the Indian Act.' And what I'm trying to do is show everyone, okay fine, you talk about it. Let's do something about it.

Let's not sit around anymore. That was the ultimate goal of my bill, is one, to raise public awareness, but also let's get going on this and let's discuss it. And let's debate this. I think I've accomplished that."

There are segments of the Indian Act that don't treat First Nations people as equals to other cultures.

For example, First Nations aren't able to grow their own produce and sell it without permission from the Minister's office.

Clarke explained what he wants is a legislative process for the government to consult with First Nations at all levels in a year by year review of the Indian Act.

"Basically it legislates the government to review it. Currently there is nothing in legislation that compels the government to review it. And this document has existed since 1876," he said.

"Hopefully, maybe one day and hopefully in my lifetime, we'll see this Indian Act gone and a more modern relationship take place."

If the bill is passed, the next step will be for the senate to go through it for another three readings.

Clarke acknowledges there is no guarantee the bill will receive royal assent and become law.

"Everyone has that fear that it won't pass. It's a lot of work trying to bring issues forward that are meaningful for Canadians and First Nations too. And if it does fail, that is at the will of the House of Commons right now."

Province launches toolkit to help reduce risk of SIDS among aboriginal families

[Victoria Times Colonist](#)

October 15, 2013 10:56 AM

VANCOUVER - Aboriginal babies in British Columbia are four-time more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome than other infants, and health officials are taking steps to cut those tragic numbers.

The horrible statistics sparked a working group involving the federal and provincial governments and the First Nations Health Authority, with input from First Nations to develop a culturally-appropriate safe sleeping training initiative.

Now an education toolkit has been launched to try to reduce the risk of SIDS and sudden unexplained death in infancy among First Nations communities.

The toolkit called, "Honouring Our Babies: Safe Sleep Cards and Guide," includes discussion cards that incorporate cultural beliefs, practices and issues specific to aboriginal communities.

Health Minister Terry Lake says the SIDS rate among First Nations families in B.C. is heartbreaking and as a province, we need to find a way to ensure babies aren't at risk.

SIDS is the sudden, unexpected death of a baby under a year old without a clear cause, and usually happens when the baby is sleeping.

© Copyright 2013

The BC Court of Appeal clarifies the scope and extent of the Crown's duty to consult Aboriginal people

[Lawson Lundell LLP](#)

October 11 2013

Keith B. Bergner

On September 26, 2013 the BC Court of Appeal released its decision in [Louis v. British Columbia](#). The decision is a reaffirmation of the principles to be applied when Aboriginal groups seek consultation in respect of past wrongs or previous breaches of the duty to consult.

Background

The province of British Columbia granted an indefinite permit to mine molybdenum at the [Endako mine](#) in 1965. The Endako mine is situated on land over which the [Stellat'en First Nation](#) ("Stellat'en") claims Aboriginal title rights and it considers the development of the mine without consultation to be a past infringement of its Aboriginal title.

The mine was reaching the end of its economic life sometime between 2011 and 2013 and had been projected to close. But with the price of molybdenum soaring, the operator developed plans for significant modernization and expansion of the Endako mine, including a small increase in the footprint of the mine. Separate

regulatory approvals were required for each new permit but the regulatory framework does not provide for holistic consideration of a multi-phase project. Without an overall review of the mine expansion project, Stellat'en refused to engage fully in the consultation process, asserting only that its traditional Aboriginal rights would be detrimentally affected, without identifying those rights.

The province conducted preliminary ethnohistoric research regarding the historic use of the project area and subsistence practices concluding that the area was used for hunting and gathering, and fishing. There are no known archaeological sites in the project area and it was noted that there has already been significant disturbance on the project area. Therefore the potential impacts of the projects were low. The province considered it had fulfilled its duty of consultation as required to maintain the honour of the Crown.

Stellat'en characterized the expansion project as a fundamental change because it meant that the land would be mined years to come instead of being reclaimed by Stellat'en on the closure of the mine in a few years' time. The chambers judge found that there was no novel impact as a result of the expansion than already existed in terms of the existing permit.

The Court of Appeal's Judgment

Dealing with the first ground of appeal, the court said that allowing the mine to continue operations for longer than originally envisaged is not a novel impact. The Crown had already divested itself of land that might be subject to Aboriginal title several decades ago. Although the mine was projected to close between 2011 and 2013, there was no actual requirement for it to close. The duty to consult represents a balance between the proper consideration and respect of asserted Aboriginal interests on the one hand and the existing rights of the applicant on the other hand.

The second ground of appeal pivoted on the depth of consultation required by the province to satisfy the honour of the Crown. The court held that the consultation was as deep as it could be, considering the lack of meaningful engagement by Stellat'en in the consultation process.

The third ground of appeal was in relation to the province's incremental consideration of the applications. The court agreed with the chambers judge that the considerations were not a sham and also that approval of one aspect at one stage did not inexorably lead to approval of other aspects at the later stages. In relation to the lack of high-level consideration of the project overall, the court reviewed the established law on the duty to consult, finding that it is incumbent on the Crown to engage in consultations from the earliest stages of the project. The province extended opportunities for consultation to Stellat'en when it made the earliest of decisions on the expansion project. It was Stellat'en's refusal to co-

operate until alleged past infringements were addressed that derailed the consultation. Accordingly, the honour of the Crown was upheld by the province.

Implications

In 2010, the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in [*Rio Tinto Alcan Inc. v. Carrier Sekani Tribal Council*](#), 2010 SCC 43, [2010] 2 S.C.R. 650 established that "*An underlying or continuing breach, while remediable in other ways, is not an adverse impact for the purposes of determining whether a particular government decision gives rise to a duty to consult.*" (para. 48.) In the *Rio Tinto* case, there was no new impact and the duty to consult did not arise.

Since the *Rio Tinto* decision, there has been ongoing debate about what happens when there are both (i) historic impacts; and (ii) new impacts arising from the currently contemplated decision. Clearly, consultation could be triggered in respect of the new impacts, but (the debate asked) would that consultation then have to also include consultation on the historic impacts? The Court of Appeal's decision resolves this debate in concluding that the Crown did not err in conducting consultations on a piecemeal basis focused on the new impacts (only) arising from the current decision.

This decision provides greater certainty for project developers regarding the scope and extent of consultation.

First Nations court aims to stop repeat offences

[The Citizen \(Cowichan Valley\)](#)

16 October 2013 14:59

Sarah Simpson

Respected elders, chiefs, mayors, councillors, judges, Mounties, and other dignitaries gathered in the Comeakin Room at the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre on the morning of Friday, Oct. 11, for the official opening of Cowichan's First Nations court.

More than 100 people gathered for the occasion, which was highlighted with remarks from BC. Justice Minister Suzanne Anton, B.C. provincial court Chief Judge Thomas Crabtree and numerous Vancouver Island chiefs and elders.

"Today we need to acknowledge our strengths, our successes, our culture and the times-tested ability to work together," said Cowichan Tribes Chief Harvey Alphonse in his opening address.

"It's time we harmonize Crown policies, actions and decision making with a new legal order," Alphonse said."

A legal order that respects the Gladue rights of First Nations. This approach will bring together aboriginal advocates, aboriginal justice workers, aboriginal community workers and the legal community."With this new way of doing things, he added, the First Nations court proposes to bring sentencing options other than jail that can be traditional, cultural, holistic, restorative and create a more healing approach to sentencing. It won't be easy, he admitted.

"In all cases when new ways of doing things take place, no doubt there will be challenges, there will be mistakes, but more importantly, there will be learning. With adversity comes opportunity and the opportunity is here today," Alphonse said.

Since May, a First Nations court based on the successful New Westminster model has been operating in Cowichan. Not every aboriginal must attend the court for their sentencing but for the ones that do, they can expect a lot more involvement throughout the completion of their sentence.

An elders' advisory panel has been selected based on the advice of local chiefs.

That group has been trained in the court system but they also bring with them the knowledge of their traditions and cultural practices. Cowichan Tribes elder Ernie Elliott sits on that panel.

"I consider it a real honour and a privilege to be sitting as an elder with the First Nations court," Elliott told the crowd.

"I don't have a law degree, I've never studied law, but what I depend on is what my elders have passed onto me from our ancestors that I try to share with our people who are appearing before the sitting judge," he said.

The goal, Elliott said, is to prevent repeat offenders and help direct offenders along the right path to becoming productive, upstanding members of the community.

"Our role, as I see it, is to assist the judge in handing down a sentence that is culturally appropriate or modified." Elliott explained. "We stress that they're not off the hook just because they're appearing before a First Nations court. They still have to accept responsibility for their actions," Elliott said.

"The elders remind the accused who they are, and how their actions impact the community and their family." Most of the cases since May deal with shoplifting, assault, and domestic abuse, he explained.

"What we try to do is share with that individual the fact that that's not in our teachings, that's not how we conduct ourselves. We need to respect each other as people, as human beings," he said.

Breaking records and stereotypes

[The StarPhoenix](#)

October 15, 2013

Angelina Irinici



Michael Linklater plays basketball with his five children at Pleasant Hill elementary school. Bridges photo by Michelle Berg Photograph by: Michelle Berg, The StarPhoenix

Maria Linklater's memory is incredible. The date rolls off her tongue: Oct. 7, 1982 at 2:30 a.m. She describes the way the train came to a stop in Thunder Bay, Ont. She remembers the way the white smoke billowed from the stack, but what she remembers the most is the way she felt.

"About two hours before, it felt like flying. I didn't have any feeling in my feet. All I had was a one-track mind to get to the train station."

She and her husband Walter were waiting to pick up baby Michael and to raise him as their own.

Maria went through great lengths for this. After Maria's sister gave up her children to adoption or foster care, she had been tirelessly searching for her nieces and nephews — she scratched her contact information on bathroom walls and left notes on the Greyhound busses, "just in case."

She found addresses for adoption agencies in the United States and wrote to them. One day, Maria's niece called from a home for unwed mothers, all the way from Trenton, N.J. She told Maria she wanted to give up her baby for adoption. "I told her, 'Don't give up your baby. I will raise your baby and you'll be proud of your baby,' " explains Maria.

Thirty-one years and a move to Saskatchewan later, Michael Linklater has got used to running. He runs, hard, up and down the basketball court. He runs after his five young children. He used to consistently run to and from Mount Royal High School, when kids called him Forrest Gump. The name works two ways — when Michael was a toddler, he had knock-knees and wore casts until the day he decided to scrape them off in the bathtub.

Today, Michael is running again — he's running late. When he looks through the window of a downtown coffee shop, he smiles. (If you know Michael, you know it's a prize-winning, ear-to-ear, dimples-and-all smile.) He waves and hurries into the café. He's dressed neat in a sharp brown sweater that's still damp from the rain and his long hair is skilfully braided. He carries a green Gatorade bottle. He sits down and leans far across the small table to say his story starts long before he was born. Michael's mother made a deal with the Creator. She terribly regretted a previous abortion and promised to keep the child if she were to get pregnant again — no matter her condition. She struggled with drug and alcohol addiction, went to residential school and was a product of the "sixties scoop," a now discredited effort to place aboriginal children in non-aboriginal foster or adoptive homes.

When Michael was born in Trenton, N.J., the odds were against him. Both his grandparents died of alcoholism. When he grew up, his best friend Kevin Moccasin was murdered during a fight. His only sibling — a half-brother — was beat to death over a bottle of alcohol. Michael discovered alcohol was the common denominator in these instances, so when he was in Grade 6, Michael made a pact with himself to never experiment with drugs or alcohol. At 31 years old, he can still proudly say he's never tried either. Not even once.

"I did it for our people so they had somebody to look up to ... now people can't say all Indians are drunks."

He'd heard countless other stereotypes of his people and he wanted to dismantle them all. He wanted to prove those people wrong. He wanted to succeed. When Michael has an idea, he makes a point of saying "I am" instead of "I will."

"I had this little fire burning inside my chest. And every time somebody told me I couldn't do something, I turned that word into a log or a piece of wood and I just put it on my fire. Soon enough I had enough doubters and non-believers and haters; I had this raging fire inside to succeed."

It worked. After picking up a basketball for the first time in Grade 4, Michael set three goals for himself: to play basketball professionally (he played for IBL's Edmonton Energy), at the university level (he did so on various teams), and, while discussing his basketball career, he realizes something. He's currently completing the final goal he set for himself as a young boy: to play for team Canada. He's part of a four-man team which qualified for the 3x3 world tour tournament. Since his team is the only one from Canada to qualify "we are officially team Canada," he says proudly.

The team travelled to Istanbul earlier this month for the tournament and made it to the quarter finals.

Since the day Michael arrived by a choo-choo train (hence his nickname Chooch), he's called Maria and Walter his mom and dad. When he was 18, he legally changed his last name to match theirs. (He's never met his birth dad. His birth mom contacts Michael after she's been drinking, and he tells her to call when she's sober. She rarely does.) Maria remembers Michael has always been busy, strong-willed and generous. She recalls a time when Michael won a traditional dance competition and gave half of his cash prize to an elder spectator.

Upon arriving home, Michael also gave money to Maria and Walter and other young kids living in their home.

"I taught him to be kind," Maria says. Michael says it was important he had two parents to call mom and dad who were home every night. Maria and Walter are respected elders in the community and he says he learned from watching them put others before themselves.

"It inspired me to grow up and help people in any way that I could," adding that became another goal.

Today, he's a dream broker for Sask Sport Inc. He works out of different elementary schools connecting inner-city youth to extracurricular activities. He says it's a rewarding job being the "middleman between being a service provider and a family." He also regularly gives motivational speeches to youth sharing his story and teaching them the importance of culture, confidence and living a respectable lifestyle.

"Once you start believing in yourself it doesn't matter if people doubt you," he tells youth.

Eugene Arcand has crusaded for Aboriginal peoples in a variety of capacities, particularly in promoting First Nations sport and recreation — he is a member of the Saskatchewan Indian Sports Hall of Fame and recognizes an athlete and a leader when he sees one. He remembers reading about Michael during Michael's high

school basketball days and wanted to meet him. At first, he observed Michael on the court.

"He was a leader on the court and he had exceptional skills. Off the court, he was also a leader by example and practising a positive lifestyle," he says. Arcand, who also calls Michael "Chooch," often asks him to speak to aboriginal youth at special seminars.

He says it only takes about half an hour until they gravitate to him: "By the end, the young people have a new hero." He says he believes the Creator puts gifted people on Mother Earth to set an example. He sees Michael as one of those people.

"He'll be a leader when the time comes. He's a leader right now ... but at some point in time I can see him being a mandated leader of our people."

Michael fidgets when he talks. He grabs the Gatorade water bottle and squirts water into his mouth as if he's on the basketball court. He's aware that he shifts his weight back and forth. He also had a difficult time concentrating in school; perhaps it's due to his mother's drinking while he was in the womb, he explains. It took him an extra year to complete high school and he says it's likely he wouldn't have gone on to post-secondary school if it wasn't for basketball. He first went to a college in North Dakota, followed by one year at the University of Saskatchewan and two years in Alberta. He then went back to the U of S for his fifth and final year. During his first season at the U of S, he and then-coach Greg Jockims butted heads.

"I voiced my opinion ... a lot," Michael laughs.

"He taught me a lot how to manage great athletes and strong personalities," says Jockims. "It was a big moment (in Michael's final year) when we both got on the same page and we understood that we both wanted the same thing."

As captain, Michael led the Huskies basketball team to its first ever national championship. Jockims says in addition to always pushing himself to be the very best, his leadership was his biggest strength. He says that Michael had a "fatherly" influence on the team and his "warrior mentality" had others following him. Not to mention his technical skills — his "tenacious" defending and "savvy" decision making.

"He was managing four kids at the time we were playing ... he was able to keep all the balls in the air," says Jockims of Michael's numerous responsibilities. "The respect that his teammates had for him grew as a result of all the things he had to control and deal with."

Now, Michael is working with a team creating a basketball program called Prime Basketball. He wants to make sure everyone feels included to join, because as

successful as Michael has been as an athlete, he admits that he dealt with racism in sport, not to mention everywhere else.

Even now, he says he has his appearance to keep in mind.

"... As sad as that sounds, somebody will think I'm just there to steal or whatever stereotype or scenario it may be." It doesn't just stop at his clothing. "...if there's, God forbid, a strand (of his braid) out of place, it looks like I don't care of myself. It's a sad truth. They may look at me differently, which I've come to understand and accept."

Maria and Walter made a point of introducing aboriginal culture, customs and traditions to their children at a young age. Michael says he's always had a strong identity and is proud to be aboriginal. A big part of that is his hair. Michael has never cut his hair; he wears his long braid with pride. There was a time when he wanted to cut his hair; having your braid pulled and being called a girl is tough.

"But as a young boy, having long hair and a braid teaches you a lot — humility, respect and pride. And compassion as well, because you know how it feels to get teased."

He says he's proud of his two boys who are going through that right now. Amari, 9, is beginning to understand, and he's still working with Dream, 5, teaching him what it means to be a boy with a braid.

Michael teaches his five children to believe in yourself, stay true to yourself and most importantly, to have a voice. He smiles often when he talks of his children (his eldest isn't blood-related, but he's raised him as his own), and looks nervous when he talks about his seven-year-old daughter starting competitive dance. He and the mother of his children are no longer together and he understands it's difficult for his children. That's why it's vital for him to spend as much time with them as he can. While he says his children are his biggest accomplishment, there's one more thing he'd like to do: He wants to go back to school and get his master's degree in Native Studies so he can continue to educate others about his culture.

He looks up to the ceiling and his words come out slowly. "I feel that I've been paving the way for up and coming aboriginals. I think I've dealt with enough in the sports field and I've made deep enough roots in non-aboriginal communities that they see we have respectable people. We are very humble and we have a lot to offer.

"I've broken down every single stereotype just being me."

Status cards need to be welcomed, Thunder Bay Chamber says
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce wants businesses to encourage First Nations customers to shop local

[CBC News](#)

Oct 16, 2013 11:49 AM ET



The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce launched a campaign this week to educate more businesses on the importance of doing business with First Nations people. (Jeff Walters/CBC)

Some Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay are welcoming a move by the Chamber of Commerce to encourage more businesses to welcome status cards.

But they also feel there's a need for more understanding by the general public. Simon Slipperjack said he hasn't always felt appreciated when showing his status card to cashiers.

"Sometimes I feel like ... they give me that ... mean look ... for pulling out my status card when I'm in line," he said.

Slipperjack said he hopes a new campaign launched by the Chamber of Commerce will help businesses learn why it's important to not make a big deal when a status card is presented.



Consultant Cindy Crowe says the general public also needs to be educated about the reason for status cards, and the importance of First Nations customers in the local economy. (Jeff Walters/CBC)

Slipperjack also recalled an experience in a local dollar store when his receipt indicated "Native Sale." He said it should have said "Tax-Exempt," instead.

'Frustration comes through'

A consultant who works on community engagement and cultural awareness with First Nations said she's seen cashiers roll their eyes, or sigh, when she presents her card.

"Their level of frustration comes through," Cindy Crowe said. "The people that are standing in the line, they experience their frustration too." Crowe said she likes the Chamber's plan and "the whole idea of having a program that welcomes the status card and welcomes that business to their store ... [it's] a really good dialogue to have and a different way of looking at it."

The next step should be educating the general public about status cards, why they're important for Thunder Bay's economy, and encouraging patience in the checkout line, Crowe added.

UN official endorses call for inquiry into missing, murdered aboriginal women

[CP24](#)

October 15, 2013 3:18PM EDT



The flag of the United Nations, UN, flies at half-staff in front of the Palais des Nations at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on Saturday, Aug. 27, 2011. (AP Photo/Keystone/Salvatore Di Nolfi)

OTTAWA -- The federal government should set up a national inquiry into the "disturbing phenomenon" of missing and murdered aboriginal women, a senior UN rights official said Tuesday.

James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, has spent the last nine days touring the country, talking to aboriginals and both federal and provincial government officials.

And while governments across Canada have pledged a number of steps to deal with the problem of missing aboriginal women, it's not enough, Anaya told a news conference in Ottawa as he wrapped up his visit.

"I have heard from Aboriginal Peoples a widespread lack of confidence in the effectiveness of those measures," Anaya said.

"I concur that a comprehensive and nationwide inquiry into the issue could help ensure a co-ordinated response and the opportunity for the loved ones of victims to be heard and would demonstrate a responsiveness to the concerns raised by the families and communities affected by this epidemic."

There has been strong pressure from aboriginal groups and some provinces for an inquiry into the disappearances, which some say run into the hundreds. The Native Women's Association of Canada estimates there have been more than 600 such cases in the last 20 years.

The federal government, however, has so far refused to entertain the idea of an inquiry.

Anaya, a professor of human rights law at the University of Arizona, also has a Canadian connection, having done several stints as a visiting professor in the law faculty of the University of Toronto.

He acknowledged that Canada has made significant progress on aboriginal issues since his predecessor delivered a tough report in 2004. But many challenges remain, he said.

"Canada faces a crisis when it comes to the situation of indigenous peoples of the country," Anaya said.

The economic gap between aboriginals and non-aboriginals hasn't narrowed, treaty and land claims remain unresolved and "there appear to be high levels of distrust among aboriginal peoples towards government at both the federal and provincial levels."

Liberal aboriginal affairs critic Carolyn Bennett pounced on Anaya's report as evidence of a hard-hearted Conservative attitude towards Canada's First Nations. "The Conservatives' adversarial approach to Aboriginal Peoples on a host of issues has created conflict and distrust, rather than reconciliation and better lives," Bennett said.

"As Mr. Anaya noted today, Canada needs to change direction urgently towards a new, collaborative partnership with Aboriginal Peoples to achieve progress and shared prosperity."

Anaya also noted that aboriginal education in Canada could be improved quickly if money given to native authorities for schooling was equal, on a per-student basis, to spending in the provincial system.

But he warned the federal government against going ahead with its proposed First Nations education bill. He said he heard "a remarkably consistent and profound distrust" about the measure and urged the government to take its time and redraft the legislation in consultation with aboriginals.

Anaya also said housing remains a dismal problem.

"I urge the government to treat the housing situation on First Nations reserves and Inuit communities with the urgency it deserves," he said.

"It simply cannot be acceptable that these conditions persist in the midst of a country with such great wealth."

Anaya also said the residential-schools era continues to cast "a shadow of despair" over aboriginal communities and he urged the government to extend the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to as long as it needs to do its work.

Paul Leroux Residential School: Former Supervisor On Trial For Sexual Assault In Saskatchewan

[Huffington Post](#)

October 16, 2013

NORTH BATTLEFORD, Sask. - A former dormitory supervisor charged with abusing boys at a northern Saskatchewan residential school is representing himself at his trial.

Paul Leroux, who is 72, has pleaded not guilty to indecent assault involving about a dozen former students of Beauval Indian Residential School for seven years during the 1960s.

His trial, which started Tuesday, is being heard by judge alone in Court of Queen's Bench in North Battleford.

Edward Mihalicz, who was a former teacher at the school from 1963 to 1985, testified he was unaware of any students being molested.

Mihalicz also said physical punishment was rarely used, except the strap in rare cases.

A video was shown in court of what life was like at the residential school during the 1960s — students' hockey games, outings to the lake, and get-togethers attended by staff.

Leroux was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 1998 for abusing 14 boys and young men at Grollier Hall, a residential school in Inuvik run by the Roman Catholic Church.

Those convictions were for gross indecency, indecent assault and attempted buggery between 1967 and 1979.

Leroux worked as an activities supervisor and guidance counsellor at Grollier.

First Nations people make up 30 per cent of Vancouver's homeless But aboriginal people make up only two per cent of city's entire population

[Vancouver Courier](#)

16 October 2013 15:04

Mike Howell

The news, again, is not good for the city's aboriginal community: 30 per cent of homeless people quizzed about their heritage in the City of Vancouver's annual homeless count identified themselves as aboriginal.

The percentage, however, could be higher since 364 of the 1,600 homeless people counted by city workers and volunteers in March did not respond to a survey or information wasn't available about their background.

Of 1,236 people who reported their heritage during the count, 30 per cent, or 369, said they were aboriginal. It's a statistic that Patrick Stewart, chairperson of the Aboriginal Homeless Steering Committee, said doesn't reflect the true number of homeless aboriginal people in Vancouver.

"We've always maintained those counts are a slice in time and an undercount," said Stewart, who is troubled by the fact two per cent of the city's population is aboriginal but continue to comprise a significant percentage of the homeless.

City council heard last Tuesday that 480 formerly homeless people who resided in the city's shelters moved in to permanent housing in the past five years. But city staff didn't track what percentage of the 480 people were aboriginal.

"We're going to certainly work towards doing more detailed information gathering in the future," said Brenda Prosen, the city's general manager of community services. Over the past few years, the Courier has interviewed aboriginal tenants in new social housing buildings. Some of those tenants were formerly homeless and moved into the eight buildings that opened under an agreement involving the city, the provincial government and Streethome Foundation.

Six more buildings are scheduled to open under the agreement. Stewart said he would expect homeless aboriginal people to get priority when the units become available. The statistics, he said, support his recommendation.

"If the homeless count says 30 per cent are aboriginal, then we should have access to 30 per cent of the units," Stewart said.

The non-profit operators of the eight buildings "work to find the appropriate tenant mix for each building, taking into account the needs of the residents and the capacity of the non-profit to manage the operation," according to B.C. Housing, in an email response to the Courier.

The City of Vancouver and B.C. Housing signed an agreement requiring 50 per cent of tenants in all 14 buildings to be from the street or shelters, 30 per cent from single-room occupancy hotels and 20 per cent considered low-income.

"The aboriginal population is reflected in that mix," B.C. Housing said.

One of the city's homeless shelters at 201 Central St. is operated by the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society.

It is located near the intersection of Main and Terminal and the majority of its 100 spaces are occupied by aboriginal people.

Susan Tatoosh, executive director of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, said shelter staff connect tenants with various service agencies and housing providers. The goal is to address a tenant's need —whether it be treatment for an addiction or finding employment — and place that person in housing linked to services.

"We have our network in place," said Tatoosh, who urged the City of Vancouver to continue giving the aboriginal community a voice when planning and making decisions to eradicate homelessness.

"They should continue doing what they're doing now which is much more than they were doing five years ago."

The B.C. Health of the Homeless Survey authored by Dr. Michael Krausz in 2011 said aboriginal people face "unique challenges and have specific health care needs as a result of colonization and the residential school system. Many have been victims of abuse and neglect and many are vulnerable and exposed to high-risk environments."

Canada's relations with aboriginals in 'crisis': UN envoy

[Vancouver Sun](#)

October 216, 2013

Mark Kennedy

Canada is facing a "crisis" over its treatment of aboriginals and the Harper government needs to take urgent steps to build trust with its indigenous peoples, says a United Nations human rights envoy.

The message came Tuesday from James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, who wrapped up an eight-day factfinding trip to Canada with an impassioned news conference near Parliament Hill.

In a sharply worded statement, he called on the Conservative government to grant an extension to a commission studying the residential schools saga, move more slowly on plans for a bill to reform aboriginal education and establish a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

He said Canada has been a world leader on human rights and was one of the first countries to extend constitutional protection to aboriginals.

"But despite positive steps, daunting challenges remain," he said. "From all I have learned, I can only conclude that Canada faces a crisis when it comes to the situation of indigenous peoples of the country."

He said the "well-being gap" between aboriginals and nonaboriginals has not narrowed in recent years, treaty claims remain "persistently unresolved" and there is a high level of "distrust" among aboriginals toward the federal and provincial governments. "Canada consistently ranks near the top among countries with respect to human development standards, and yet amid this wealth and prosperity, aboriginal people live in conditions akin to those in countries that rank much lower and in which poverty abounds."

He said at least one in five aboriginal Canadians live in homes in need of serious repair, which are often also overcrowded and contaminated with mould. The suicide

rate among Inuit and First Nations youth on reserve - more than five times greater than other Canadians - is "alarming," he said.

"One community I visited has suffered a suicide every six weeks since the start of this year. Aboriginal women are eight times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous

women and indigenous peoples face disproportionately high incarceration rates."

Amid all this, he said governments are taking steps to address the problems, but they have fallen far short of what is needed.

Anaya said Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government must spend more time truly consulting aboriginals.

"If that doesn't happen, the path forward is going to be a rocky one."

Anaya met last week with Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, who issued a written statement Tuesday which did not address his specific recommendations. Instead, Valcourt pointed to Anaya's compliments of Canada and insisted that the Conservative government is preoccupied with the "well-being" of aboriginals and is taking "effective incremental steps" to make progress for them.

After his tour of Canada - he met federal politicians in Ottawa and travelled to several provinces where he met aboriginals - Anaya will prepare a report that will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September of 2014.

On Tuesday, he said it's important for the government to seriously consider his preliminary recommendations, which include: Grant the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, tasked with getting the facts on the residential school scandal, an extension for "as long as may be necessary."

Recognize that "resource extraction" - such as oil and mining - should not occur on lands subject to aboriginal claims without "adequate consultations" and the "free, prior and informed consent" of the aboriginals affected. This recommendation could take on added significance if a proposed plan to build the Northern Gateway pipeline through British Columbia gets a regulatory green light.

© Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun

Toronto Aboriginal Community Engaged

[Net Newsledger](#)

October 16, 2013



The City of Toronto is reaching forward for next June's National Aboriginal History Month

TORONTO – The City of Toronto is reaching out to the Aboriginal community in the city. "We're looking for powerful images that evoke Toronto's spirit,

energy and unique Aboriginal character," said Councillor Mike Layton (Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina), Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Affairs Committee. "There is so much creativity in the Toronto Aboriginal community, and I'm sure the character will be well-portrayed. We are all looking forward to seeing all the entries."

The City of Toronto's Aboriginal Affairs Committee has launched a poster design contest in preparation for National Aboriginal History Month in June.

The contest is open to all Aboriginal youth between the ages of 13 and 24 years old. The winning design will be used to help to promote events leading up to the 2014 National Aboriginal Day in Toronto.

Entries will be evaluated based on content, creativity, uniqueness, relevance to the contest theme and overall visual appeal. Entries must be paint, pencil, multi-media, photography or in an electronic design format. A panel of three people will judge the entries and all judges' decisions are final.

Entries must be received by Friday, November 22 at 11:59 p.m. The winner will be notified by November 29 and announced publicly at the City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards, December 4. All submitted non-winning artwork can be retrieved from the City at the end of the contest period.

More information about how to enter and the contest rules are available at <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity>.

Aboriginal business and professional association launched in Edmonton

[Edmonton Journal](#)
October 15, 2013

Aksis, an aboriginal business and professional association funded by the City of Edmonton and Government of Alberta, was launched in Edmonton on Monday.

"Establishing an aboriginal business association for Edmonton took years of hard work and we are thrilled to celebrate with many of the people who helped us make it happen," said Debbie Houle, president of the board of directors.

Aksis will serve as a central meeting point for Edmonton's aboriginal business and professional community.

"Our goal is to be an advocate and progressive voice for aboriginal businesses and professionals in this city, to create a collaborative and inclusive network that allows our members to forge business connections and build relationships," said executive director Terry Coyes.

Aksis will also establish an annual awards program to recognize excellence and celebrate exceptional members of their community.

© Copyright (c) The Edmonton Journal

New clinic expands health care services

Nippissing.com

October 17, 2013

Laura J. Campbell

NORTH BAY – Health care options for Aboriginal people living in the North Bay area got a real boost last week with the opening of the Medicine Wheel Healthy Way Clinic at the Indian Friendship Centre on Oct. 9.

"We are trying to reduce barriers to health care for the Aboriginal community," said Brenda Taylor the nurse practitioner running the clinic.

Taylor says the Friendship Centre, as host of the clinic provides, "a comforting environment that is welcoming to clients. They drop in here for many reasons and are much more likely to access health care just by the nature of us being in the building."

Services offered at the clinic include infant and child check-ups and immunizations, prenatal care, annual health exams, sexual health services, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of health conditions, health promotion and referrals to specialists and other agencies.

"The Aboriginal population tends to be a younger with many children, so I expect to see a lot of young families," said Taylor. "There are also a number of students who

come from the reserves up north to attend college and university and their families often come with them. These people have no health care provider while they are here so we expect a lot of those will be clients as well.

"Many of the elderly are suffering from chronic illness, so we're going to be seeing the full spectrum of health care issues," she said.

The clinic will be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, by appointment only and the cost of the medical service is free. Clients are limited to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who live off-reserve within the North Bay area.

The Indian Friendship Centre partnered with the Victorian Order Nurses in bringing Taylor to the clinic. The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit also helped in setting up the clinic and two local doctors are collaborating on the medical care.

Applications for the clinic are available at the Friendship Centre.

Trust lacking on native file

[StarPhoenix](#)

October 17, 2013

For Saskatchewan and other provinces that can benefit immensely from tapping the talents of their burgeoning young First Nations population, it's important that the federal commitment to improving aboriginal education goes beyond a passing reference in a throne speech that will be all but forgotten within days.

Given the abysmal graduation rates of First Nations children, particularly on reserves where about six in 10 students fail to complete high school, it's obvious that the aboriginal education system needs to change if things are to improve.

The government "will continue working with First Nations to develop stronger, more effective, and more accountable onreserve education systems," the throne speech noted.

Yet, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's insistence that a new First Nations education act will proceed despite concerns raised by aboriginal leaders about the lack of consultation, and his push to enact reforms before any more money will be made available, suggest a top-down approach that's at odds with the real challenges that face reserve students.

There's a good reason why the bipartite agreement signed by Premier Brad Wall and FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde this summer included a provision to more forcefully lobby the federal government to close the funding gap between on-reserve and provincially funded schools.

The funding gap continues to be downplayed by federal governments, which have since 1996 capped grant increases to First Nations at two per cent a year while their population growth and needs have far outpaced that limit. The impact on reserve schools, which must compete for teachers with others in provincially funded schools and whose costs for services and supplies keep rising, is evident in their sub-par performance reflected in low graduation rates.

UN special rapporteur James Anaya's observation this week of a "remarkably consistent and profound distrust" among First Nations leaders toward the new education act, and their "deep concerns that the process for developing the act has not appropriately included nor responded to aboriginal views" is something that the minister cannot ignore.

Not only is it vital to Canada's future to invest in developing the potential of a vast human resource on its reserves, but if education is to be the centrepiece of the Conservative government's aboriginal policy, it's also important that Mr. Valcourt proceed in a manner that fosters trust and co-operation of First Nations leaders. In no small way, their goodwill and partnership are integral to Canada's economic growth, especially when it comes to resource development and shipping across traditional lands.

While Mr. Valcourt said in recent interviews that funding will follow reforms, it will be interesting to see whether aboriginal education funding will be a priority within a federal operating budget that the speech said will be frozen at current levels.

It shouldn't take a UN rapporteur to underline for the federal government Canada's urgent need to invest in the future of its aboriginal people. For the investment to succeed, it has to be equitable, timely and based on a foundation of co-operation and trust - something not yet in evidence.

The editorials that appear in this space represent the opinion of The StarPhoenix. They are unsigned because they do not necessarily represent the personal views of the writers. The positions taken in the editorials are arrived at through discussion among the members of the newspaper's editorial board, which operates independently from the news departments of the paper.

© Copyright (c) The StarPhoenix

The Harper government is failing to meet its most fundamental obligations towards the aboriginal peoples and towards the Crown

[Canada NewsWire](#)

October 17, 2013

Mélanie Vincent

WENDAKE, QC, Oct. 17, 2013 /CNW Telbec/ - By refusing to take part in any respectful dialogue with First Nations, in imposing measures that are bound to fail from the start, for example its obsession with a legislation for education which will only worsen an already dire situation, by failing to fill the fundamental obligations of the Canadian State towards the First Nations, including amongst others, those set forth in Treaties, the Harper government shows it is unworthy to represent the Crown.

"The reconciliation with First Nations, the accommodation of First Nations' interests with those of the Crown, and the implementation of Treaties are just some of the obligations that are incumbent upon the Leader of the Government of Canada. He must fulfill that mandate while keeping the honour of the Crown in mind. The Crown with whom the First Nations have agreed to live in harmony in the same territory. We are still waiting for Stephen Harper to face up to his responsibilities. At present that has not happened", stated Ghislain Picard, Chief of the AFNQL.

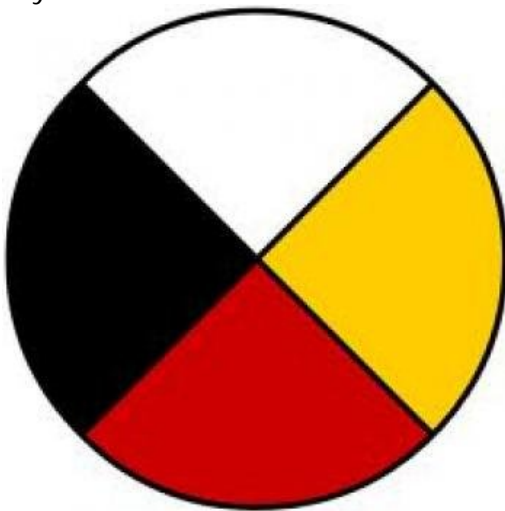
"On the one hand, a speech from the Throne which only puts off until later actions which should have been undertaken a long time ago, and on the other hand the findings of the United Nations Special Rapporteur who once again remind the Canadian government of the urgent need for action with the First Nations to bring an end to a situation that is unbearable and dangerous for the social peace and the development of the Canadian economy. This is a disgrace to Canada, yet, it is a flourishing country with progressive traditions and it deserves much better than what the current government is offering", concluded Chief Ghislain Picard.

Activist Communique: Numbered treaty system in Canada

Rabble.ca

October 16, 2013

Krystalline Kraus



Hey all, so I received a few emails from people confused about the numbered treaty system in Canada so I'm going to lay down a quick tutorial.

The numbered treaty system on Turtle Island/Canada consists of 11 treaties which were created -- some Indigenous nations feels unfairly -- between 1871 and 1921.

Since Canada falls under British Crown, the treaties were signed by the reigning monarchs at the time by Queen Victoria, Edward VII or George V, though they are implemented by

the Canadian government through the oversight of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Here is a list of the numbered treaties in Canada.

[Treaty 1](#) - August 1871: the first treaty signed, a controversial agreement established August 3, 1871 between Queen Victoria and various First Nations in South Eastern Manitoba including the Chippewa and Swampy Cree tribes. This includes the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation; Fort Alexander (Sagkeeng First Nation); Long Plain First Nation; Peguis First Nation; Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation; Sandy Bay First Nation and Swan Lake First Nation.

[Treaty 2](#) - August 1871: signed the same year as Treaty 1, this was an agreement established August 21, 1871, between the Queen Victoria and various First Nations in southwest Manitoba and a small part of southeast Saskatchewan.

Treaty signatories from this region include the Ojibway Nation. This includes the Dauphin River First Nation; Ebb and Flow First Nation; Keeseekoowenin First Nation; Lake Manitoba First Nation; Lake St. Martin First Nation; Little Saskatchewan First Nation; O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation (Crane River); Pinaymootang First Nation (Fairford); Skownan First Nation (formerly Waterhen First Nation and the Pine Creek First Nation.

[Treaty 3](#) - October 1873: this agreement, signed on October 3, 1873 by Queen Victoria and the Ojibwe Nation, encompasses a vast amount of Anishinaabe territory that was ceded to the Crown. The area includes a large section of northwestern Ontario and a small section of eastern Manitoba. Treaty 3 also established provisions for rights for the Métis and other Ojibway, through a series of adhesions signed over the next year.

Treaty 3 has been involved in a series of litigations over the years regarding the rights of Indigenous people vs. the obligations set out under the treaty signed by the Crown. Litigations include [St. Catherines Milling v. The Queen](#) (1888) and [The Dominion of Canada v The Province of Ontario](#) (1910).

Treaty 3 nations include Big Grassy First Nation - Morson, Ontario; Big Island First Nation - Morson, Ontario; Buffalo Point First Nation - Buffalo Point, Manitoba; Couchiching First Nation - Fort Frances, Ontario; Eagle Lake First Nation - Migisi Sahgaigan, Ontario; Grassy Narrows First Nation - Grassy Narrows, Ontario; Iskatewizaagegan 39 First Nation - Shoal Lake, Ontario; Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation - Thunder Bay, Ontario; Lac La Croix First Nation - Fort Frances, Ontario; Lac Seul First Nation - Hudson, Ontario; Naicatchewenin First Nation - Devlin, Ontario; Nootkamegwaning First Nation - Pawitik, Ontario; Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation - Fort Frances, Ontario; Northwest Angle 33 First Nation - Kenora, Ontario; Northwest Angle 37 First Nation - Sioux Narrows, Ontario;

Obashkaandagaang Bay First Nation - Keewatin, Ontario; Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining Ojibway Nation - Kenora, Ontario; Onigaming First Nation - Nestor Falls, Ontario; Rainy River First Nations - Emo, Ontario; Ojibway Nation of Saugeen First Nation - Savant Lake, Ontario; Seine River First Nation - Mine Centre, Ontario; Stanjikoming First Nation - Fort Frances, Ontario; Shoal Lake 40 First Nation - Shoal Lake, Ontario; Wabauskang First Nation - Ear Falls, Ontario; Wabigoon Lake First Nation - Dryden, Ontario; Wauzhusk Onigum First Nation - Kenora, Ontario and Wabaseemoong Independent Nations - Whitedog, Ontario.

[Treaty 4](#) - September 1874: this treaty is also called the Qu'appelle Treaty and was signed on September 15, 1877. It was established between Queen Victoria and the Cree and Saulteaux First Nations and covers most of southern Saskatchewan, plus a small area of western Manitoba and southeastern Alberta. It consists of a [long list of nations](#), some signatories from other treaties. These include the Swampy Cree Tribal Council; West Region Tribal Council; File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council; Saskatoon Tribal Council; Touchwood Agency Tribal Council; Yorkton Tribal Administration and other independent signatories.

[Treaty 5](#) - September 1875 (adhesions from 1908–1910): this treaty area was first established in September, 1875, between Queen Victoria and Saulteaux and Swampy Cree non-treaty tribes and peoples around Lake Winnipeg in the District of Keewatin and essentially covers most of central and northern Manitoba, and small sections of Saskatchewan and Ontario. It was completed in two rounds from September 1875 to September 1876.

These nations include the Berens River First Nation; Bloodvein First Nation; Bunibonibee Cree Nation; Chemawawin Cree First Nation; Fisher River Cree Nation; Fox Lake Cree Nation; Garden Hill First Nations; God's Lake First Nation; Grand Rapids First Nation; Hollow Water First Nation; Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation; Black River First Nation; Little Grand Rapids First Nation; Manto Sipi Cree Nation; Mosakahiken Cree First Nation; Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation; Norway House Cree Nation; Opaskwayak Cree Nation; Pauingassi First Nation; Pimicikamak First Nation, Poplar River First Nation; Red Sucker Lake First Nation; St. Theresa Point First Nation; Sayisi Dene First Nation; Shamattawa First Nation; Tataskweyak Cree Nation; War Lake First Nation; Wasagamack First Nation; York Factory First Nation; Deer Lake First Nation; North Spirit Lake First Nation; Pikangikum First Nation; Poplar Hill First Nation; Sandy Lake First Nation; Cumberland House Cree First Nation; Red Earth First Nation; and the Shoal Lake of the Cree First Nation.

[Treaty 6](#) - August–September 1876 (adhesions in February 1889): this treaty agreement was signed between the Crown and the Plain and Wood Cree, Assiniboine, and other Indigenous Nations at Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt and Battle River in the area of Saskatchewan and Alberta and two Manitoba nations. Signatories of this treaty were heavily influenced by the rapidly diminishing buffalo on the Canadian plains. The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations was

created in the spring of 1993 by 17 of Treaty Six band governments to be the "united political voice" of the Treaty Six First Nations.

Treaty 6 nations include the Alexander First Nation [Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation]; Beaver Lake Cree Nation; Cold Lake First Nation; Enoch Cree Nation; Ermineskin First Nation; Frog Lake First Nation; Heart Lake First Nation; Kehewin Cree Nation; Louis Bull First Nation; Michel First Nation; Montana First Nation; O'Chiese First Nation; Paul First Nation; Saddle Lake Cree Nation; Samson First Nation; Sunchild First Nation; Whitefish Lake First Nation; Marcel Colomb First Nation; Mathias Colomb First Nation; Ahtahkakoop First Nation; Beardsy's and Okemasis First Nation; Big Island Lake Cree Nation; Big River First Nation; Chakastaypasin First Nation; Flying Dust First Nation; Island Lake First Nation; James Smith First Nation; Lac La Ronge First Nation; Little Pine First Nation; Lucky Man First Nation; Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation; Mistawasis First Nation; Montreal Lake Cree Nation; Moosomin First Nation; Mosquito, Grizzly Bear's Head, Lean Man First Nation; Muskeg Lake First Nation; Muskoday First Nation; One Arrow First Nation; Onion Lake Cree Nation; Pelican Lake First Nation; Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation; Poundmaker First Nation; Red Pheasant First Nation; Saulteaux First Nation; Sweetgrass First Nation; Sturgeon Lake First Nation; Thunderchild First Nation; Waterhen Lake First Nation and Witchehan Lake First Nation.

[Treaty 7](#) - September 1877: an agreement between Queen Victoria and several mainly Blackfoot First Nations in southern Alberta. Member include Kainai Nation (Blood); Pikani First Nation (Piegan); Siksika Nation (Blackfoot); Tsuu T'ina Nation (Sarcee); Stoney First Nation and the Assiniboine Nation.

[Treaty 8](#) - June 1899 (with further signings and adhesions until 1901): this treaty area of 840,000 square kilometres (84,000,000 ha), is larger than France and includes northern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan and a southernmost portion of the Northwest Territories. Members include the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta; the Treaty 8 Tribal Association (British Columbia) and First Nations Treaty members of Saskatchewan.

[Treaty 9](#) - July 1905: also known as the James Bay Treaty, this agreement was established by King Edward VII and includes large areas of Northern Ontario and one First Nation community in the bordering Abitibi region of northwestern Quebec.

Member nations include the Abitibiwinini First Nation (Quebec); Albany First Nation; Aroland First Nation; Attawapiskat First Nation; Bearskin Lake First Nation; Brunswick House First Nation; Cat Lake First Nation; Chapleau Cree First Nation; Chapleau Ojibway First Nation; Constance Lake First Nation; Eabametoong First Nation; Flying Post First Nation; Fort Severn First Nation; Ginoogaming First Nation; Kasabonika Lake First Nation; Keewaywin First Nation; Kingfisher First Nation; Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (KI); Matachewan First Nation;

Mishkeegogamang First Nation; Missanabie Cree First Nation; Neskantaga First Nation; Nibinamik First Nation; Mattagami First Nation; Muskrat Dam Lake First Nation; Marten Falls First Nation; McDowell Lake First Nation; Moose Cree First Nation; North Caribou Lake First Nation; Sachigo Lake First Nation; [Slate Falls Nation](#); Taykwa Tagamou Nation; Wahgoshig First Nation; Wapekeka First Nation; Wawakapewin First Nation; Webequie First Nation; Weenusk First Nation; and the Wunnumin Lake First Nation.

[Treaty 10](#) - August 1906: is an agreement established beginning August 19, 1906, between King Edward VII and various First Nations communities in northern Saskatchewan and a small portion of eastern Alberta. The agreement was drafted based on the Treaty 8 text. Treaty 10 members include Barren Lands First Nation; Northlands First Nation, Birch Narrows First Nation; Buffalo River Dene Nation; Canoe Lake Cree First Nation; English River First Nation and Hatchet Lake First Nation.

[Treaty 11](#) - June 1921: is an agreement established between June 27, 1921, and July 17, 1922, between King George V and various First Nations communities in the Northwest Territories. Treaty 11 members include the Acho Dene Koe First Nation; Aklavik First Nation; Behdzi Ahda First Nation; Dechi Laoti' First Nation; Deh Gah Gotie Dene Council; Deline First Nation; Dog Rib Rae First Nation; Fort Good Hope First Nation; Gameti First Nation; Gwicha Gwich'in First Nation; Inuvik Native First Nation; Jean Marie River First Nation; Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation; Liidli Kue First Nation; Nahanni Butte First Nation; Pehdzeh Ki First Nation; Sambaa K'e (Trout Lake) Dene First Nation; Tetlit Gwich'in First Nation; Tulita Dene First Nation; West Point First Nation and the Wha Ti First Nation.

Status cards and taxes

[Chronicle Journal](#)
October 17, 2013

AN unfortunate side effect of the rights of aboriginal people in Canada is misunderstanding and even resentment of rules around taxes. Don't blame them; blame the tax officials who have written a hodge-podge of regulations and exemptions that can differ between provinces.

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce is trying to simplify the process with standard signage welcoming status cards at retail establishments. The chamber's aboriginal opportunities committee has found the shopping experience is at times difficult for aboriginal consumers.

Merchants have problems, too. For one thing, status cards are supposed to be presented before the sale is tallied. Checkout signs to that effect are common. But it is just as apparent that some merchants do not understand or appreciate the rights

to tax exemptions which can lead to delays for other shoppers and, in extreme cases, refusal of service to aboriginal buyers.

These consumers spend an estimated \$300 million in Thunder Bay annually. Getting a legal tax exemption right should be a matter of course for merchants. But it should not be this difficult.

Merchants are expected to visually confirm the photograph on the card is that of the purchaser, record the transaction date, person's name, card number, band registry number and a brief description of the property or services sold. A sales clerk at a busy checkout counter can be forgiven for feeling frustration as can the people waiting in line.

Native people are exempt from paying certain taxes. That is the law. It used to apply to goods and services purchased for or on reserves. But Ontario and British Columbia created exemptions in 2010 for status Indians off-reserve to save the eight-per-cent provincial portion of the federal HST.

According to the Ontario finance ministry website, "Generally, tangible personal property (TPP) purchased off-reserve for personal use by a status Indian, or for use by an Indian band or band council, qualify for the POS (point of sale) exemption. Supplies such as new and used vehicles purchased from dealers and take-out meals are also included." So are warranties and maintenance on personal property, and telecommunications service including cable TV, phone and Internet.

Items that do not qualify for the HST point-of-sale exemption in Ontario include restaurant meals, energy, gasoline, alcohol and tobacco. First Nations members on reserves do not pay taxes on tobacco and gasoline sold on reserves. In the Thunder Bay area, meanwhile, non-natives regularly line up at a number of Fort William First Nation gas stations for lesser though still substantial savings on fuel, presumably because taxes applied at city gas stations do not apply or are not as hefty on the reserve. Cheaper cigarettes at reserve stores are also popular among all buyers. Up to a billion dollars in unpaid taxes on some cigarettes is estimated to be lost to Ontario and Ottawa through sale of tobacco to non-native buyers.

That is a separate issue from retail tax exemptions for status Indians off-reserve. The fact the Chamber of Commerce is re-launching its Status Cards Welcome campaign for the second time in a decade shows that confusion continues to beguile the system.

If there is one thing that can unite native and non-native consumers alike around this issue, it is that the tax folks make things way more complicated than they need to be.

25th Anniversary: Native Americans Recognize 25 Years Under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act

[PR Newswire](#)

October 17, 2013

When the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) was signed into law on Oct. 17, 1988, many tribal leaders strongly opposed the federal policy as an infringement on the sovereignty of Indian Country to operate casino-style gaming facilities on tribal lands.

In retrospect, however, IGRA, while limiting, has proven to be one of the most progressive economic tools for many tribes, particularly in California, forever changing the face of gaming in this country and making IGRA's 25th anniversary one worth recognizing.

"It's the one federal Indian policy—amidst a host of failed policies that the federal government has tried to implement over the years—that has truly helped promote and strengthen economic development and self-determination among tribal governments," said Robert Smith, Chairman of the California Tribal Business Alliance (CTBA). "While the policy has its limitations, IGRA allows America to live up to its promise to American Indians and fulfills the visions of Presidents Obama and Reagan, respectively, to 'honor treaties and recognize tribes' inherent sovereignty and right to self-government under U.S. law' and to restore tribal governments to their rightful place among the governments of this nation and to enable tribal governments, along with state and local governments to resume control over their affairs."

The U.S. Supreme Court opened the door for the Native American gaming industry—leading to the passage of IGRA—when it ruled in 1987 that states have no power to interfere with the right of tribes to conduct any form of Indian gaming on reservations unless all such gaming was prohibited in the state in *California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians*.

While Indian nations have always had the right as sovereign governments to exercise governmental authority over its lands and people, including gaming, IGRA served as a compromise to allow states some regulatory control.

"Before IGRA was enacted, many tribes were not treated equally in many policy arenas or even consulted on federal policies that would impact them," said Leslie Lohse, Vice-Chair of CTBA and Tribal Council Treasurer of the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians of California since 1998. "Although it has not benefited all tribes to the same degree, it has allowed tribes to escape poverty and despair and gain footing on such policy discussions."

As part of the compromise, IGRA—which is intended to promote economic development, self-sufficiency and a strong tribal government—established three classes of games with different regulatory rules for each.

Class I gaming includes traditional Indian gaming or social gaming for minimal prizes and is not subject to government oversight. Class II gaming includes "player banked" card games (such as Poker) and bingo and allows tribes to retain authority as long as the state in which the Tribe is located permits such gaming. IGRA also created the National Indian Gaming Commission, which regulates and oversees Class II gaming. The final category was Class III gaming, which is restricted, and includes high-stakes casino-style gambling, including slot machines, blackjack, craps and roulette, as well as electronic games.

Under IGRA, states have regulatory control over Class III gaming through tribal-state compacts that lay out conditions, regulations and limitations—which many tribal leaders perceive as a legal encroachment by federal and state governments that undermines cultural survival, political autonomy and economic development successes.

"IGRA has no doubt been helpful to tribal economies, but it has also placed limits and restrictions on the conditions that must be met before tribes can offer gaming," said Cita Welch, Treasurer of CTBA and Vice Chair of the *Viejas* Band of Kumeyaay Indians.

"Nonetheless, much of the Indian gaming industry has thrived and become an integral part of tribal economies, with IGRA providing a framework to allow tribes to generate revenues and optimize their potential."

When given the chance, IGRA can benefit all communities and allow Indian nations to create a robust tribal government gaming industry without depending on the federal government.

"Self-determination is critical, and in order for tribes to protect their inherent rights and prevent their economic development ventures from being trampled on, embracing IGRA is imperative to the preservation of Indian sovereignty and self-reliance for current and future generations," Smith said.

SOURCE California Tribal Business Alliance

‘The problem of Indian administration,’ then and now

[National Post](#)

October 17, 2013

Thomas King



Red Deer and District Archives An undated handout photo of students, staff and visitors at the Red Deer Indian Industrial School.

On Oct. 21, the winner of the \$60,000 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction will be announced in Toronto. In anticipation of this award, the National Post presents excerpts from all five nominated books. Today's excerpt is taken from *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, by Thomas King.

In a new book, author Thomas King explains how American and Canadian leaders have systematically misunderstood the needs of the continent's aboriginal people since first contact

In Canada, residential schools began popping up in the 1840s, and by 1932, there were more than 80 schools in operation. In 1850, attendance at residential schools became compulsory for all children from the ages of six to 15. There was no opting out. Non-compliance by parents was punishable by prison terms. Children were forcibly removed from their homes and kept at the schools. As with their U.S. counterparts, schools insisted that the children not have any extensive contact with their families or home communities. Students were forbidden to speak their languages or practice any part of their culture.

The schools in both countries were, for the most part, overcrowded. Diseases flourished. Sexual and physical abuse was common. The children received neither proper nutrition nor proper clothing. In 1907, Dr. Peter Bryce submitted a report to Duncan Campbell Scott, the Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, which set the mortality rate for Native students at residential schools in British Columbia at around 30%. The rate for Alberta was 50%. I'm not sure exactly how Scott reacted to the report, but, in 1910, he dismissed the high death rate at the schools, insisting that "this alone does not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem."

Final solution. An unfortunate choice of words. Of course, no one is suggesting that Adolph Hitler was quoting Scott when Hitler talked about the final solution of the "Jewish problem" in 1942. That would be tactless and unseemly. And just so we're perfectly clear. Scott was advocating assimilation, not extermination. Sometimes people get the two mixed up.

In 1926, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Hubert Work, commissioned a survey that looked at the general condition of Indians in the United States. Lewis Meriam, a

Harvard graduate with a law degree from George Washington University and a doctorate from the Brookings Institution, led the investigation.

In the 847-page report, "The Problem of Indian Administration," (1928), Meriam declares candidly: "The survey staff finds itself obliged to say frankly and unequivocally that the provisions for the care of Indian children in boarding school are grossly inadequate." The report went on to describe the diet at the schools as "deficient in quantity, quality, and variety," and insisted that the "per capita of 11 cents a day" per student was insufficient.



CANADIAN PRESS/ho-Library and Archives Canada A nurse takes a blood sample from a boy at the Indian School, Port Alberni, B.C., in 1948.

Diseases such as tuberculosis and trachoma were rampant. Dormitories were overcrowded "beyond their capacities." Medical services were not up to a "reasonable standard." Nor were the children getting much of an education. "The boarding schools are frankly supported in part by the labor of the students," noted the report. "Those above the fourth grade ordinarily work for half a day and go to school for half a day. A distinction in theory is drawn between industrial work undertaken primarily for the education of the child and production work done primarily for the support of the institution." The question, says the report, "may very properly be raised as to whether much of the work of Indian children in boarding school would not be prohibited in many states by the child labor laws."

Of the residential school system in general, the report was succinct and to the point: "The first and foremost need in Indian education is a change in point of view. Whatever may have been the official governmental attitude, education for the Indian in the past has proceeded largely on the theory that it is necessary to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment, whereas the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life. The Indian educational enterprise is peculiarly in need of the kind of approach that recognizes this principle, that is less concerned with a conventional school system and more with the understanding of human beings."

Overall, the Meriam Report was extremely critical of the federal government and its failure to protect the rights of Natives as well as tribal land and tribal resources. Perhaps that is why, in the years since the report was filed, the U.S. has never commissioned another study of its kind. Why would the government spend money, one could argue, to ask questions for which it already knows the answers?



Algoma University Archives Photograph of a group of altar boys at St. Anne's Indian Residential School in Fort Albany, Ont.

Canada waited until the 1960s to ask the same question of Indian policy that their American cousins had asked thirty-eight years earlier. The Hawthorne Report, which was published in 1966 and 1967, looked at "the contemporary situation of the Indians of Canada with a view to understanding the difficulties they faced in overcoming some pressing problems and their many ramifications." The "problems," according to the report, were the "inadequate fulfillment of the proper and just aspirations of the Indians of Canada to material well being, to health, and to the knowledge that they live in equality and in dignity with the greater Canadian society."

The report was a well-researched, conscientiously written document, whose preamble was careful to stress that the researchers did not believe that "Indians should be required to assimilate, neither in order to receive what he now needs nor at any future time." Indeed, the framers of the report were explicit in pointing out that "it is our opinion that the retention of these identities is up to the Indians. No official and perhaps no outside agency at all can do that task for them. Whether or not, and to what extent, Indians remain culturally separate depends on what it is worth to them."

I have no quarrel with this basic premise, that the retention of our identities is up to us. Still, it is a strikingly disingenuous argument in that the report makes little mention of the myriad of ways in which Canadian Indian policy has discouraged Indians from pursuing traditional goals and aspirations and continues to push us up the cattle chute of capitalism.

But let's put the philosophical sophistries to one side for the moment. While the report was awash in generous language and fine recommendations, it was also narrowly focused on the economics of being Indian and the problems that bands and individuals have in measuring up to the expectations of Canadian capitalism. The per capita income of Indians in the 1960s, for example, was only \$300, less than a quarter of the per capita income of non-Indians, while the average duration of employment for Native people was 4.8 months. Of the Sarcee and the Blood in Alberta, the report notes that while these bands have "ownership and access to a wealth of resources, as well as to metropolitan centre which offers manifold job opportunities," they fail "to utilize these assets fully." For "northern Indians ... any substantial improvement in the employment and income prospects ... will be possible only with a large-scale migration to, and relocation in, areas offering opportunities for remunerative wage employment." Indians, the report laments, are not accustomed to employment, "which require regular hours, punctuality, and a highly mechanized routine of work." At every turn, the report posited White goals and standards as the measure against which Native people were to be measured and in each instance, Indians were found wanting.

The Hawthorne report revealed the logical fallacy that always has haunted Indian policy: that all people yearn for the individual freedom to pursue economic goals

There were a host of recommendations that the Hawthorne Report put forth to try to close the gap between Native people and non-Natives. Many of them were reasonable, but what the report highlighted was that, in terms of economic development and economic sustainability, Canadian Indian policy had been a failure.

More to the point, the report revealed the logical fallacy that has haunted Indian history and policy in North America since contact — to wit, that all people yearn for the individual freedom to pursue economic goals. Indians are people, ergo, they want to make money and create wealth for themselves and their families.

Here's the irony: Native people have never been resistant to education. We had been educating our children long before Europeans showed up. Nor have we been against our children learning about White culture. By the beginning of the 19th century, Natives and Whites had been living together in the same neighbourhood for almost 300 years. Like it or not. It made sense for Native people to know English and/or French. It made sense to understand how the European mind worked.

Education is generally described in terms of "benefits." But why, in the name of education, should we have been required to give up everything we had, to give up who we were in order to become something we did not choose to be. Where was the benefit in that?

Instead, North America decided that Native education had to be narrowly focused on White values, decided that Native values, ceremonies, and languages were inferior and had no value or place in a contemporary curriculum. This was the first abuse of the residential school system.

The second abuse was the unwillingness and inability of the governments of Canada and the United States, and the governing bodies of the various churches, to oversee the schools under their control.

The third abuse, once officials knew that health conditions and services were substandard, once they knew that disease was rampant, once they knew malnutrition was a problem, once they knew for certain that the children under their protection were being physically, mentally, and sexually abused, was their failure to act. They did nothing.

They knew, and they did nothing.

Excerpted from The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America. Copyright © 2012 Dead Dog Café Productions Inc. Published by Doubleday Canada, a division of Random House of Canada Limited. Reproduced by arrangement with the Publisher. All rights reserved.

East Coast Tribes Celebrate Native Culture as Pow Wow Season Winds Down

Indian Country Today

October 15, 2013

As pow wow season begins to wind down, ICTMN is reporting on three events held by the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, Chickahominy Tribe and the Meherrin Tribal Nation.

According to Chief Lynette Allston of the Nottoway tribe, the important takeaway from her pow wow, which happens annually at the end of September in Surry County, Virginia, is 'just being together' to celebrate Native culture.

"It is a wonderful time for Native people to get together to have, camaraderie, fellowship and friendship," Allston said. "But it goes beyond just Native, it goes to everyone and that way people learn about each other."

Allston also said that a group of soldiers came to the pow wow from Fort Lee to create another opportunity for its community to learn about history.

"Having a pow wow really turns into an educational event, a cultural event, a ceremonial event and just good time to be together," she said.

At the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia pow wow, the master of ceremonies was John Blackfeather Jeffries (Occaneechi Saponi), the head dancers were Debora Moore (Pamunkey) and Louis Campbell (Lumbee) and the drum groups were Yough-Ta-Nund and Na-Ma-Wo-Chi.



A woman and young boy attend the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia Pow Wow (Courtesy Vincent Schilling)

The 62nd Annual Chickahominy Pow Wow, which took place September 28th and 29th in Providence Forge, Virginia, focused on Eastern Woodlands Indian culture.

During the pow wow, visitors took in a wide range of native dances styles including the

Chicken Dance, Hoop dancing, Grass dancing, as well as men's and women's traditional, Jingle Dress and Fancy Shawl.

Also in attendance at the Chickahominy pow wow was Chief Stephen Adkins, noted MC Keith Colston (Tuscarora/Lumbee) the VEVITA Honor Color Guard from Washington, D.C., and former Virginia Governor Tim Kaine.

At the Chickahominy pow wow, the head dancers were Chris Fortune, (Rappahannock) and Rebecca Balog, (Oglala Sioux/Mohawk) and the host drum group was Yough-Ta-Nund from Richmond, Virginia.

The Meherrin celebrated their 25th Annual Pow Wow last weekend in Ahoskie, North Carolina.

According to Chief Wayne Brown of the Meherrin tribe, his pow wow has a strong focus on Iroquoian tradition and so the dances were slightly different than what you might see in other tribes with a Powhatan influence.

"Most of the natives from this area were not Iroquoian," said Brown. "The only Iroquoian nations down here were the Nottoway, the Meherrin, and the Tuscarora, so our dances are a little different."

The Meherrin tribe, which is Iroquoian, danced the Smoke Dance and the Duck Dance both styles that are celebrated by the Iroquois Nation.

imagineNATIVE fest celebrates banner year for First Nations film

[Arts Online](#)

October 17, 2013 2:56 PM

Christian Allaire



*Shay Eyre, left, and Cara Gee star in the multi-generational drama *Empire of Dirt*. (imagineNATIVE Film Festival)*

"Right now, it feels really good to be Indian."

It's been a banner year for indigenous cinema and that

closing line from the film *Empire of Dirt*, produced by and starring Saulteaux filmmaker Jennifer Podemski, is a sentiment that prevails more than ever as this year's [imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival](#) takes place in Toronto.

Directed by Peter Stebbings, *Empire of Dirt* is one of feature-length imagineNATIVE titles that [premiered earlier at the Toronto International Film Festival](#) in September,

along with Jeff Barnaby's irreverent and gritty [*Rhymes for Young Ghouls*](#) and documentarian Alanis Obomsawin's *Hi-Ho Mistahey!*



Actress, director and producer Jennifer Podemski (imagineNATIVE Film Festival)

According to Podemski, having indigenous representation at TIFF is a step in the right direction.

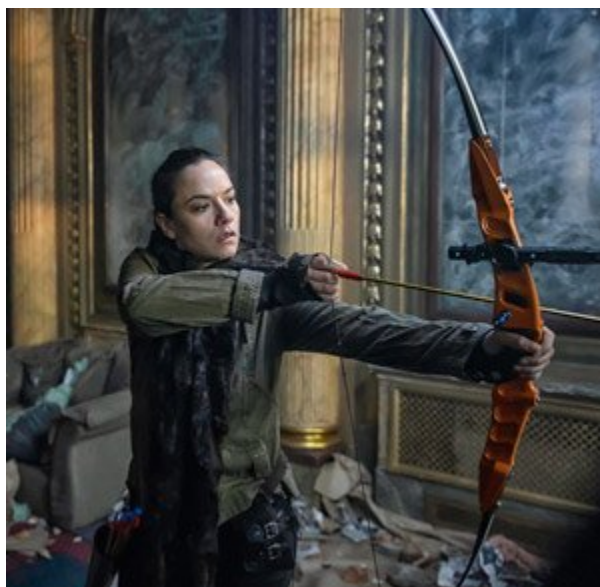
"It helped us prove that native is not a genre. It doesn't belong in a category onto itself," said the actress, director and producer, whose film examines the tri-generational struggles of a family of First Nations women.

"We rarely see more than one film, which you can't help feeling like you're a quota, filling some sort of cultural niche."

What general interest moviegoers may not know is that imagineNATIVE has played a large role in the growing prominence of indigenous film, which is gaining a national, mainstream audience.

"We can't deny that imagineNATIVE has had an impact on the festival circuit. People are looking for these works," says Jason Ryle, the festival's executive director.

"Certainly indigenous filmmakers and artists have been creating work always, but festivals like imagineNATIVE have really provided a platform that didn't exist for a diversity of stories to be told."



Danis Goulet's short film Wakening, starring Sarah Podemski, takes figures from aboriginal myths and casts them in a post-apocalyptic tale. (imagineNATIVE Film Festival)

Currently in its 14th year, the five-day festival is the world's largest indigenous film and media arts festival. With a 2013 lineup 101 films overall — the festival's largest offering to date — imagineNATIVE promises an exciting slate of dramatic films, documentaries, shorts, discussion panels and art exhibits this week.

Cree filmmaker [Danis Goulet](#), whose short film *Wakening* opened TIFF this year, hopes to educate non-indigenous audiences when her work screens in larger festivals.

"The two characters in [my] film are re-imaginings of classic Cree characters from an oral tradition, Weesageechak and Weetigo, so I sort of felt like they were infiltrating this huge film festival," says Goulet.

"People don't necessarily know who these people are and to me they're just as classic as Shakespeare."

Though she appreciates the support of other events, she is looking forward to her imagineNATIVE screening Thursday night at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.



Christian Allaire is an Ojibwe writer from Nipissing First Nation, currently living in Toronto. He is covering the 2013 imagineNATIVE Film Festival for CBC and has written for This Magazine, Flare and the Toronto Standard. Follow him on Twitter at @chrisjallaire.

"As a filmmaker, I've been to some of the biggest film festivals in the world, like Cannes, Berlin, Sundance," says Goulet.

"imagineNATIVE, for me, is like coming home."

That sense of community is one thing that has always remained true to the festival's original spirit. It was apparent

at this year's opening ceremony, held Wednesday at the [Native Canadian Centre of Toronto](#).

Bannock was served and a dance ceremony showcased different styles: from traditional to jingle and grass. At one point, colourful regalia intermingled with contemporary clothing, as attendees joined performers for one final round dance. It was a mix of the traditional and the new, much like imagineNATIVE itself.

imagineNATIVE runs through Sunday